

THE MONK AS AN ELEMENT  
OF BYZANTINE SOCIETY

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A perusal of the third edition of the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*<sup>1</sup> reveals some ninety persons, inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire from the beginning of the seventh century to the end of that Empire in the fifteenth, who achieved sainthood. Of those ninety, at least seventy-five had been monks. This statistic by itself shows the importance which Byzantine society attached to the monastic life. In Byzantium, the monk—at least as a projected ideal—embodied the aspirations of his society as a whole. That is why he, as a living being, was a vital element of that society and the monastery a characteristic feature of the Byzantine landscape.

That monastic establishments in the Byzantine Empire throughout the duration of its existence were very numerous is a matter which admits of no doubt. A considerable number of them, though unquestionably only a very small fraction of the total, have been identified and their general emplacement determined. Hans-Georg Beck, in a remarkable book<sup>2</sup>—apparently restricting himself to monasteries about which something definite can be said—lists 160 monasteries which existed at one time or another during the history of the Empire after the end of the sixth century. Beck's list is admittedly and necessarily incomplete, and to it can be added a considerable number of known monasteries located in every region of the Empire, including Cappadocia, where, according to one scholar, the number of rock-cut monasteries astonishes the traveller. It has been possible to revise Beck's list upward to include a total of 241 monasteries by adding monastic establishments drawn from other lists and by eliminating monasteries mentioned by Beck but appearing elsewhere in our documentation,<sup>3</sup> or presumed to be included in such general estimates as that

<sup>1</sup> Revised and enlarged by François Halkin (Brussels, 1957), 3 vols.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirche und theologische Literatur in byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 207–27.

<sup>3</sup> In making this revision, the following references have been used. Hélène Ahrweiler, "L'Histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317), particulièrement au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Travaux et mémoires*, 1 (1965), 92–98; V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, V, 2, *L'Eglise* (Paris, 1965), 147–222; Gabriel Millet, "Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, 19 (1895), 419–59. Millet describes six monastic establishments located in the region of Trebizond. In a discourse delivered by Joseph, metropolitan of Trebizond (1364–1367), we read that in Trebizond the monasteries and the houses for virgins were densely populated and those who lived in them not easily enumerated: *Fontes Trapezuntini* I, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, 1897), 58: *μοναὶ δὲ καὶ παρθενῶνες διαβεβοημέναι κατάπικτοι καὶ πλήθος λαοῦ οὐκ οὖν ῥαδίως ἀριθμητόν*. G. de Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, I, 1 (Paris, 1925), 43–52; Nicole and Michel Thierry, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce, Région du Hasan Dağı* (Paris, 1963), 21, 22, 24–25, 26, 31, 35, 41, 175ff.; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Nouvelles notes cappadociennes," *Byzantion*, 33 (1963), 139, 142, 144, 158, 167, 173, 174, 180; J. Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus . . .* (London, 1901), 329ff.; George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, I (Cambridge, 1940), 272 f.; Cyril Mango and Ernest J. W. Hawkins, "The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall Paintings," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 20 (1966), 204; Antoine Bon, *Le Péloponnèse byzantin jusqu'en 1204* (Paris, 1951), 143ff.; Dion. A. Zakythinos, *Le Despotat grec de Morée*, II (Athens, 1953), 295ff. Of the numerous monasteries located on the islands, Beck's list includes only three, the famous monastery of John the Theologian on Patmos, and two located in Cyprus. No monastery in pre-Venetian Crete and Epirus is mentioned and there is no reference to Skripou and Sagmata in Boetia. On Cretan monasteries, see St. Xanthoudides, "Ἡ Ἐνετοκρατία ἐν Κρήτῃ καὶ οἱ κατὰ τῶν Ἐνετῶν Ἀγῶνες τῶν Κρητῶν" (Athens, 1939), 8–9. For a general reference to Epirote monasteries, see G. L. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staats-*

of R. P. B. Menthon, who says that the number of monasteries which at one time or another had been built on, or around, Mt. Olympus in Bithynia numbered no less than 100.<sup>4</sup>

Generally speaking, the Byzantines founded their monasteries on mountains or on ground difficult of access. So it was that with the loss of the eastern provinces in the seventh century, the rugged terrain of Cappadocia, the mountains of Auxentios, Olympus, Sigriane, Galesion, and Latros—all located on the western coastal regions of Asia Minor—became great monastic centers. Both Olympus and Latros early came to be known as the holy mountains.<sup>5</sup> In Europe the great monastic center, beginning with the second half of the tenth century, was, of course, Mt. Athos,<sup>6</sup> but other high places such as Ganos<sup>7</sup> on the Propontis coast of Thrace, Papikion,<sup>8</sup> near the present Komotini in western Thrace, Cithaeron in Attica,<sup>9</sup> and finally, beginning with the fourteenth century, the Meteora in Thessaly,<sup>10</sup> were also important centers.

But monasteries were founded in cities, too. It may be said, indeed, that Constantinople was the greatest monastic center of the Empire. R. Janin has identified 325 monasteries (including nunneries) which, at one time or another in the course of the Empire, were located in the Byzantine capital and its European suburbs.<sup>11</sup> The monastic establishments located in Thessalonica and its immediate surroundings no doubt numbered more than the twenty-four which have been identified.<sup>12</sup> Monasteries existed in other cities as, for instance, Amori-

*geschichte der Republik Venedig*, I (Vienna, 1856), 470 ff., 490 f. On the church and monastery in Skripou, see M. Sotiriou, "'Ο ναός της Σκριπούς Βοιωτίας," *Αρχαιολογική Έφημερίς* (1931), 119–57. For a good illustration of the church, see M. Chatzidakis, A. Tassos, and Ph. Zachariou, *Byzantine Monuments in Attica and Boeotia* (Athens, 1956), pl. 1. On Sagmata: A. H. S. Megaw, "The Chronology of some Middle-Byzantine Churches in Athens," *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 32 (1931–32), 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Une terre de légendes. L'Olympe de Bithynie. Ses saints, ses couvents, ses sites* (Paris, 1935), 8–9.

<sup>5</sup> On Mt. Olympus as a monastic center, Menthon's work (note 4) remains fundamental. On Latros as a holy mountain, see Ahrweiler, *op. cit.*, 91 and note 123. See also P. L. Bokotopoulos, "Άάτρος," *Έπετηρίς Έταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών*, 35 (1966–67), 69–106.

<sup>6</sup> The literature on Mt. Athos is very extensive. For a sound general survey with references to the basic bibliography, see E. Amand de Mendieta, *La presqu'île des Caloyers. Le Mont-Athos* (Bruges, 1955). For the latest detailed study on Mt. Athos, see John P. Mamalakes, *Τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος (Ἄθως) διὰ Μέσου τῶν Αἰώνων* (Thessalonike, 1971). This publication has just reached me and I have not therefore had the time to examine it with care, but at first glance it appears to be a very solid work. For a collection of documents relating to it as a monastic center, that by Ph. Meyer is still basic: *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster* (Leipzig, 1894).

<sup>7</sup> On Ganos, see Laurent, *op. cit.*, 152.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>9</sup> Chr. A. Papadopoulos, "'Ο ὁσιος Μελέτιος ὁ νέος," *Θεολογία*, 13 (1935).

<sup>10</sup> For a general account on the Meteora, one may consult D. M. Nicol, *Meteora. The Rock Monasteries of Thessaly* (London, 1963).

<sup>11</sup> *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin. Première partie. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique. III. Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1953), p. 4 for the figure 325, but all monasteries of Constantinople whose existence could be established are treated in the book. On the monks in Constantinople about 451, see now G. Dagron, "Les moines et la ville. Le monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au Concile de Chalcedon (451)," *Travaux et mémoires*, 4 (1970), 229 ff.

<sup>12</sup> John Cameniatas, *De excidio Thessalonicensi* (Bonn, 1838), 494. Cf. P. N. Papageorgiou, "'Εκδρομή εις τὴν βασιλικὴν καὶ πατριαρχικὴν μονὴν τῆς ἁγίας Ἀναστασίας τῆς Φαρμακολουτρίας . . .," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 7 (1898), 59; O. Tafrali, *Topographie de Thessalonique* (Paris, 1913), 192–202; *idem*, *Thessalonique au quatorzième siècle* (Paris, 1913), 99–101; M. Th. Lascaris, "Ναοὶ καὶ μοναὶ Θεσσαλονίκης τὸ 1405 εἰς τὸ ὁδοπορικὸν τοῦ ἐκ Σμολένσκ Ἰγνατίου," *Τόμος Κωνσταντίνου Ἀρμενοπούλου ἐπὶ τῇ ἐξακοσιετηρίδι τῆς Ἐξαβίβλου αὐτοῦ* (1345–1945) (= *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρίς*, 6 (Thessaloniki, 1952), 319–27.

on, where Father Laurent is tempted to locate a monastery dedicated to the forty-two martyrs of Amorion, whose existence became known to him through a seal which he has recently published.<sup>13</sup> That Amorion was indeed a monastic center of some significance is indicated by other sources. Michael Syrus, in relating the capture of Amorion by the Arabs in 838, writes: "The monasteries and nunneries were so numerous that more than a thousand virgins, not to speak of those who were massacred, were led away into captivity."<sup>14</sup> Trebizond was another center and later, during the period of the Palaeologi, Mistra, the capital of the despotate of Morea, also became a center of monastic establishments.<sup>15</sup>

Roughly 700 monasteries are involved in the lists and estimates to which references have been made. This number as a total is not really very important, for it represents only a fraction of the monastic establishments which at one time or another existed in the Byzantine Empire. What is important is that there are approximately 700 Byzantine monasteries (really fewer, because Menthon's estimate of the Mt. Olympus monasteries includes only a few about which some information can be given) whose history is somewhat known to us, and, as a consequence, it is possible to form some idea concerning the ups and downs of Byzantine monastic establishments.

The number of these establishments varied from century to century. An analysis of Janin's list reveals ninety-two monasteries known to have existed in the capital in the sixth century. No documentation past that century exists for seventy of these monasteries. Of the remaining twenty-two, one is said to have existed until the beginning of the eighth century;<sup>16</sup> six are attested to have been destroyed by Constantine V;<sup>17</sup> the documentation for three others does not go beyond the beginning of the seventh century;<sup>18</sup> one is not referred to after the sixth century until its reconstruction by Saint Luke the Stylite in the tenth century;<sup>19</sup> five are said to have continued into the tenth century;<sup>20</sup> there is a reference to one as still existing in 1025;<sup>21</sup> one is still found to exist at the beginning of the thirteenth century;<sup>22</sup> and four endure into the fourteenth century.<sup>23</sup> In only a few cases, however, is the documentation such as to remove all doubts that these monasteries had a continuous existence to the date of the last reference to them. As for new foundations erected in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, there are only two in Janin's list. One of the two may have been founded earlier, but the first certain reference to its existence

<sup>13</sup> Laurent, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 3), 197-98.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Syrus, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot, 3 (Paris, 1905), 100.

<sup>15</sup> On the monasteries of Mistra, see Zakythinos, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 3), 296 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Janin, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 11), 15 ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 86 ff., 103 f., 285, 335, 446.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 395, 462, 344.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 59, 283, 293, 335.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 460.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 100, 201, 233, 326.

dates it as of 695;<sup>24</sup> the other is said to have been founded by the wife of Leo III.<sup>25</sup> Beck's list reveals a similar pattern among monasteries located in the provinces.

The inference that may be drawn from this information is that a decline in the number of monastic establishments began sometime in the seventh century and continued into the eighth. The meagerness of the sources for this entire period may prompt the question whether the decline is more apparent than real. The answer is that it may, indeed, be only apparent for the seventh and the early part of the eighth century, if the matter is restricted to the territories left under the jurisdiction of the Empire following the events of the seventh century; but that it is real as it pertains to the second half of the eighth century, certainly up to 775. This is the period when the throne was occupied by Constantine V, the only Byzantine sovereign who tried to effect nothing less than the eradication of monasticism from the Empire.<sup>26</sup> He cajoled and persecuted, promising rewards to monks who would abandon the monastic garb and subjecting the others to every kind of humiliation. Monks holding nuns by the hand were paraded in the Hippodrome; many were forced to marry; many more were sent into exile; some were even put to death. Monasteries were destroyed or sold or were transformed for other uses. Books relating to the monastic life were burned.<sup>27</sup> The chroniclers stress especially the measures against monks and nuns taken by the governor of the Thraceseion theme, as a result of which not a single one is said to have survived in that province.<sup>28</sup>

The antimonastic measures of Constantine V were related, of course, to his iconoclastic policy, for the monks had proven the most obdurate opponents of that policy. It is probable, however, that other factors of a demographic nature contributed to his consideration. It is generally agreed that beginning with 541 the Byzantine Empire entered into a demographic crisis which lasted over two centuries.<sup>29</sup> The crisis was particularly acute during the reign of Constantine V. That Constantine was aware of this crisis is shown by the fact that he tried to do something about it. He settled thousands of Slavs (according to one chronicle, 208,000) in Asia Minor and thousands of Syrians and Armenians, seized by the raiding of regions under Moslem rule, in Thrace.<sup>30</sup> Thousands of his own subjects, moreover, made chastity a cardinal principle of their own lives as well as an ideal to propagate, obviously a serious matter in its demographic implications. It is not unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 511.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 486. On page 471 there is a reference to a monastery which existed in 729, but nothing more is said about it.

<sup>26</sup> J. Pargoire, *L'église byzantine de 527 à 847* (Paris, 1923), 308.

<sup>27</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, I (Leipzig, 1883), 442-43; Nicephorus, *Opuscula historica*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1880), 71-72, 74; Cedrenus-Scylitzes, *Historiarum compendium*, II (Bonn, 1839), 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> Theophanes, *ibid.*, 445-46; Cedrenus-Scylitzes, II, 15-16. See further: Alfred Lombard, *Constantin V, empereur des Romains (740-775)* (Paris, 1902), 149-69.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Charanis, "Observations on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire," *Proceedings of the XIII<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 1967), 445ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 456, 457.

this matter helped to turn Constantine's hostility against the monks—a hostility first aroused by their obdurate opposition to his iconoclastic policy—into a determination to eradicate monasticism itself.

Constantine failed. No sooner had he died than the monastic establishments began to flourish as never before, ushering in what a scholar has called the golden age of Byzantine monasticism.<sup>31</sup> For the period from about 780 to 1200 there are references in Janin's list to 159 monasteries located in Constantinople and its European suburbs. Seventy-five of these monasteries had come into existence in the course of the ninth century and in the last years of the eighth; twenty-six, forty-three, and fifteen more appear in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries respectively. Meanwhile, twenty-eight have disappeared from the sources by the end of the ninth century, twenty-nine by the end of the tenth, and twenty-four more by the end of the eleventh. The number of monasteries which can be definitely attested to in Constantinople for each of the centuries in question stands at seventy-five for the ninth century, seventy-three for the tenth, eighty-seven for the eleventh, and seventy-eight for the twelfth.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these figures. They show first that sometime close to the year 780 there began a period of feverish activity in the founding of monasteries; that it was particularly intense during the ninth century but continued into the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. The figures show further that individual monastic establishments often did not last. Finally, they indicate that fewer monasteries were founded in the tenth century than in either the ninth or the eleventh.

This third point is precisely what would be expected on the basis of other sources. The legislation of Nicephorus II Phocas prohibiting new monastic establishments, later repeated in somewhat different terms by Basil II, obviously had some effect,<sup>32</sup> as indicated by these numbers. It by no means follows, of course, that all of the monasteries which dropped out of the sources actually ceased to exist. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to assume that at least some of them did, especially if the total number of disappearances is substantial. Furthermore, that individual monastic establishments did indeed cease to exist is attested to by the very text of the legislation of Nicephorus II Phocas, which speaks of many monasteries in decay.<sup>33</sup> Additional evidence is supplied by various references to individual monasteries which became deserted.

One such monastery was that of the Thessalonians located on Mt. Athos. A document dated 1169 says of it that "it was formerly well peopled," but that it no longer existed, "its walls and habitations having fallen into ruins." This was the monastery which in 1169 was granted to Russian monks established since 1142 in another Athonian monastery called Xylourgou. These monks re peopled the abandoned Thessalonian monastery, dedicated it to St.

<sup>31</sup> V. Laurent, *La vie merveilleuse de Saint Pierre d'Atroa* († 837), *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 29 (Brussels, 1956), 35.

<sup>32</sup> On these legislations, see Charanis, "The Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 4 (1948), 56f., 63f.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 56f.

Panteleimon, and made it the center of their operations. The enterprise endured; it is the well-known Roussikon which still exists on Mt. Athos.<sup>34</sup>

Incursions by enemies, lack of adequate resources (or their despoilation by laymen put in charge of their management), and the attraction of other monasteries were the principal reasons why monasteries were abandoned. The movement of monks from one monastery to another was a comparatively easy matter in the Byzantine Empire, despite numerous regulations—renewed and emphasized from time to time—designed to make such movement difficult.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the West, Byzantium had no monastic orders.

The first conclusion drawn from our figures—that at about 780 the founding of monasteries began at a zealous pace, that it intensified especially in the ninth century, and that it continued throughout the tenth, eleventh, and into the twelfth century—is indisputable. It finds confirmation in the list of provincial monasteries compiled by Beck and in references to important persons who are said to have founded new monasteries. A perusal, for instance, of Cedrenus-Skylitzes and other chroniclers reveals no less than eighteen such founders—nine who lived in the ninth century,<sup>36</sup> five who lived in the tenth,<sup>37</sup> and four who lived in the eleventh.<sup>38</sup> Included in these figures are nine sovereigns: Irene, Michael I, Theophilus, Basil I, Leo VI, Romanus I Lecapenus, Romanus III Argyrus, Michael IV, and Constantine Monomachus.<sup>39</sup> The list is incomplete and does not include founders known from other sources as, for instance, the monastic *typica*.

Monasteries, of course, continued to be founded after the twelfth century and on down to the end of the Empire, while many of the old ones remained in existence. There was, indeed, a veritable revival of monastic establishments in western Asia Minor under the Lascarids.<sup>40</sup> Five of the monasteries of Mt. Athos were founded in the fourteenth century.<sup>41</sup> In Thessalonica, at least eighteen monasteries still existed in the fourteenth century. One of them, the Nea Moni, was founded sometime between 1350 and 1374.<sup>42</sup> Just before Constantinople fell in 1453 there were at least eighteen monasteries still standing in the city.<sup>43</sup> To this later period belong, of course, the monasteries built in Mistra and on the Meteora in Thessaly, and, although these were fewer in number than had been the case earlier, their relative numerical significance was just as great, if not greater, because the territorial extent of the Empire had been very much

<sup>34</sup> On all this, see A. Soloviev, "Histoire du monastère russe au Mont-Athos," *Byzantion*, 8 (1933), 213–38.

<sup>35</sup> On this, see E. Herman, "La 'stabilitas loci' nel Monachismo Bizantino," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 21 (1955), 115–42.

<sup>36</sup> Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 27), II, 108; II, 118–19; II, 241; II, 269; II, 31. Theophanes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 27), I, 478; I, 494; I, 481.

<sup>37</sup> Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *op. cit.*, II, 275; II, 263; II, 265. Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn, 1838), 365, 366.

<sup>38</sup> Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *op. cit.*, II, 488; II, 497; II, 513; II, 593.

<sup>39</sup> Theophanes, *op. cit.*, I, 478; I, 494; Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *op. cit.*, II, 31; II, 108; II, 241; II, 313; II, 497; II, 513; II, 593. Theophanes Continuatus, *op. cit.*, 365. What Theophilus had founded was a home for the aged, but the foundation was transformed into a monastery.

<sup>40</sup> Ahrweiler, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 3), 91 ff.

<sup>41</sup> Amand de Mendieta, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 6), 32 f.; cf. Beck, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 2), 220 f.

<sup>42</sup> Tafrahi, *Thessalonique au quatorzième siècle*, 99 ff.; cf. Lascaris, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 12), 319 ff.

<sup>43</sup> Janin, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 11), 4.



reduced. At the same time, there was a serious decline in the population and economic resources of the Empire. It is this decline which explains why so many monasteries located in Constantinople seem to have disappeared.

Meanwhile, the mentality which for centuries had nurtured monasticism and was in turn nurtured by it continued to prevail. From the death of Constantine V in 775 to the end of the Empire, no significant change took place in that sphere. New issues of a spiritual nature or of ecclesiastical jurisdiction—particularly the question of union with Rome—in which the monks were involved did indeed appear, and the effects of these issues on the political life and internal peace of the Empire were very serious, but this only confirms what has just been said about the changelessness of the reciprocal relationship between the general mentality and monasticism throughout this period.

To the question of how many monks may have existed in the Byzantine Empire at any one period after the sixth century no final or definite answer can be given. There are, however, some figures with which to work. It is said that the monastery of Photeneidos on Mt. Olympus numbered one hundred and eighty monks at the time of Theodore Studite.<sup>44</sup> Another monastery located not far from Photeneidos housed more than two hundred monks.<sup>45</sup> Saccudion, also a Bithynian monastery, was founded by Plato, the uncle of Theodore the Studite, and almost from the very beginning attracted to its doors more than one hundred monks.<sup>46</sup> Studium, at the time Theodore became its abbot (799), housed only twelve monks.<sup>47</sup> Under his direction it is said the number increased to one thousand.<sup>48</sup> The accuracy of the latter figure has been questioned by a modern scholar on the grounds that it cannot be reconciled with the fairly modest dimensions of the monastery's church. He suggests the possibility of an error on the part of the biographer of Theodore, who is the source for this figure, or, what is more likely, that the number includes, besides the monks of Studium itself, those of other monasteries more or less under the jurisdiction of Studium.<sup>49</sup> These are large numbers, but they are not characteristic of the Byzantine monastic establishment in general, as is shown by the examples given below.

A monastery for women located in Lycia at the beginning of the seventh century housed forty nuns.<sup>50</sup> Balentia in Lydia, an establishment founded by Peter of Atroa, had no more than fifteen monks.<sup>51</sup> Polychronion, a monastery located in the environs of Mt. Olympus, contained about seventy monks when Methodius, the brother of Cyril, was its abbot.<sup>52</sup> When Athanasius founded Lavra on Mt. Athos in 963, it was stipulated that it should have eighty

<sup>44</sup> Beck, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 2), 209.

<sup>45</sup> Menthon, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 4), 157.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>47</sup> *Vita S. Theodori Studitae* in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 99, col. 145.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>49</sup> D. Julien Leroy, "La vie quotidienne du moine studite," *Irenikon*, 27 (1954), 26 and note 4.

<sup>50</sup> John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* in Migne, PG, 87, col. 2997.

<sup>51</sup> V. Laurent, *La vie...* (as in note 31, *supra*), 165–67.

<sup>52</sup> Fr. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Prague, 1933), 385 (chap. iv); cf. 211.

monks. By the reign of Constantine Monomachus in the eleventh century, the population of Lavra had increased from one hundred to seven hundred,<sup>53</sup> though the latter figure might include the inmates of the *metochia* under Lavra's jurisdiction. In 1083, the Athonian monastery of Xenophon, which was founded about 1010, housed fifty-five monks,<sup>54</sup> a relatively large number, according to a modern scholar.<sup>55</sup> The monastery which the historian Michael Attaliates founded in Constantinople in 1078 was intended to have seven monks, but because of the difficulties of the times he was able to recruit only five. He provided, however, that this number might in the future be increased in proportion to any increase in the resources of the monastery.<sup>56</sup> Irene Ducas, wife of the Emperor Alexius, fixed at twenty-four the number of nuns for the nunnery which she founded sometime before 1118. In the event that the resources of the institution increased, the number of nuns might be raised to a maximum of forty. At the same time Irene put under the jurisdiction of her nunnery a much smaller establishment, with a complement of four nuns.<sup>57</sup> The monastery of the Pantocrator, according to the *typikon* issued in 1136 by its founder, the Emperor John II Comnenus, was to house a maximum of eighty monks. Also under its jurisdiction were six other monasteries, two of which were to be inhabited by eighteen monks each, two by six each, one by sixteen, and the last by twelve.<sup>58</sup> The number of monks to be housed by the monastery of the Kosmosotira, founded about 1152 near Aenos by the Sebastocrator Isaac, the brother of John II, was not to exceed seventy-four.<sup>59</sup> The monastery of St. Mamas, reconstructed about 1147 after it had been allowed to fall into ruins by the *charistikarii* to whom it had been granted from time to time, was to have twenty monks.<sup>60</sup> The number of monks of the Elegmon, an old monastery located in the diocese of Nicaea which was reconstructed about 1162, was fixed at twenty.<sup>61</sup> The Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus reconstructed two monasteries: St. Demetrius in the capital and that of the Archangel Michael on Mt. Auxentios. The number of monks to be housed by the first was fixed at thirty-six,<sup>62</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Meyer, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 6), 114.

<sup>54</sup> Louis Petit, *Actes de l'Athos*, I. *Actes de Xenophon* (= Appendix of *Vizantiiskij Vremennik*, 10 [1903]), 22.

<sup>55</sup> Laurent, *Le corpus*... (as in note 3, *supra*), 149.

<sup>56</sup> F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi*, 5 (Vienna, 1887), 311.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 337, 372.

<sup>58</sup> A. Dmitrievsky, *Opisanie Liturgicheskikh Rukopisei*, I. *Typika* (Kiev, 1895), 671, 675 ff.

<sup>59</sup> L. Petit, "Typikon du monastère de la Kosmosotira près d'Aenos (1152)," *Bulletin (Izvestija) de l'Institut archéologique Russe à Constantinople*, 13 (1908), 21.

<sup>60</sup> Dmitrievsky, *op. cit.*, 1: 702–15; S. Eustratiades, "Τυπικὸν τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει μονῆς τοῦ ἁγίου μεγαλομάρτυρος Μάμαντος," *Ἑλληνικά*, 1 (1928), 256–311. On the "charisticium" defined as a grant of a monastery to a layman for the economic exploitation of its properties, see G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1968), 372 f.; Charanis, "Monastic Properties..." (as in note 32, *supra*), 72 ff.; E. Herman, "Ricerche sulle istituzioni monastiche bizantine. Typika ktetorika, caristicari e monasteri 'liberi,'" *OCP*, 6 (1940), 293–375; P. Lemerle, "Un aspect du rôle des monastères à Byzance: Les monastères donnés à des laïcs, les charisticaires," *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. d. Inscr. et Belles-Lett.* (1967), 9–28; H. Ahrweiler, "Charisticariat et autres formes d'attribution de fondations pieuses au Xe–XIe siècles," *Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'études byzantines*, 10 (1967), 1–27.

<sup>61</sup> Dmitrievsky, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 58), 725.

<sup>62</sup> H. Grégoire, ed. and trans., "Imperatoris Michaelis Palaeologi de Vita Sua," *Byzantion*, 29–30 (1959–60), 473.

those to be housed by the second were not to exceed forty.<sup>63</sup> Placed under the jurisdiction of St. Demetrius were eighteen other monasteries in Constantinople, Bithynia, and Thrace. The number of the inmates of each was likewise fixed, totalling, according to my calculations, one hundred and fifteen monks, though the total given by the document is higher.<sup>64</sup> The Athonian monastery of Zographou is said to have had twenty-six monks during the reign of Michael VIII.<sup>65</sup> Two nunneries, one founded by Michael's wife, the other by his niece, were restricted in the number of nuns they could have, the first to fifty,<sup>66</sup> the second to thirty.<sup>67</sup> The Nea Moni of Thessalonica, founded sometime before 1376, was restricted to nineteen inmates.<sup>68</sup> Finally, and this takes us back to the eleventh century, St. George, a monastery established in Thebes by Meletios the Younger (who was a Cappadocian native and, like many other ascetics, achieved sanctity) had twelve monks when Meletios left it.<sup>69</sup> Symbolon, a monastic establishment on Mt. Cithaeron in Attica, to which Meletios moved and which he subsequently enlarged, housed during his regime one hundred monks.<sup>70</sup> In addition to enlarging Symbolon, Meletios built in the same general region a number of smaller monasteries—twenty-two, according to one of his biographers, twenty-four, according to another—each housing from eight to twelve monks.<sup>71</sup>

What inferences may be drawn from these figures is a matter for speculation. It may be meaningful, however, to determine an average number of monks for each of the monasteries in the three groups of the Mt. Cithaeron, the Pantocrator, and the St. Demetrius, giving averages of sixteen, twenty-two, and eight, respectively. However, from an average involving all the monasteries for which we have figures it is difficult to derive any meaning at all, both because the monasteries in question spanned several centuries, and because they were not stable in the number of their inmates. When Studium came under the direction of Theodore, it had no more than twelve monks.<sup>72</sup> Were the monks who soon raised this figure to one thousand new initiates, or were they inmates from other houses? The indications are that many of them were or had been inmates of other houses.<sup>73</sup> Certainly many of the monks of Saccudion, numbering, as has already been said, over one hundred, must have followed their leader to

<sup>63</sup> Dmitrievsky, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 58), 780.

<sup>64</sup> Grégoire, *op. cit.*, 473–74.

<sup>65</sup> Sp. Lampros, "Τὰ Πάτρια τοῦ Ἀγίου ὄρους," *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων*, 9 (1912), 159.

<sup>66</sup> Hippolyte Delehay, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), 109.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>68</sup> V. Laurent, "Une nouvelle fondation monastique des Choumnos: La Nea Moni de Thessalonique," *Revue des études byzantines*, 13 (1955), 116–17. Cf. *idem*, "Ecrits spirituels inédits de Macaire Choumnos († c. 1382)," *Ἑλληνικά*, 14 (1955), 54, where (probably a misprint) the figure is sixteen.

<sup>69</sup> Papadopoulos, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 9), 106.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 109f. Cyril Mango called to my attention an inscription published in volume 33 (1914) of the *Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, which refers to a monastery located in Nicaea. The editor dates the inscription as of 591, but it no doubt belongs to a much later period. According to this inscription (p. 138), this monastery had forty-two monks. This monastery has not been taken into account in the calculations which follow. See also *Postscriptum*.

<sup>72</sup> *Vita S. Theodori Studitae* (*supra*, note 47), col. 145.

<sup>73</sup> Leroy, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 49), 27, note 3.

Constantinople. About 977 the monastery of St. Mamas was virtually uninhabited, but under the direction of Symeon, known as the New Theologian, who became its abbot, the number of its inmates was increased to well over thirty.<sup>74</sup> By 1147 it had again fallen into desuetude, with only two remaining monks, who, since their monastery had fallen into ruins, wandered from place to place.<sup>75</sup> In less than a century after Lavra had been founded its complement of monks had reached seven hundred, though at one time it had been only one hundred.<sup>76</sup> This increase may have been due to the acquisition by Lavra of Kellia as well as of lesser monasteries. In 1334 the Athonian monastery of Koutloumoussion had thirty monks and apparently was still growing. Some years earlier it had only twelve.<sup>77</sup>

If a curve were drawn on the basis of our first set of figures, those monasteries that would be out of line would be the three Bithynian monasteries, and Studium, Lavra, and Symbolon on Mt. Cithaeron. Symbolon presents no problem, because the number of its inmates lends itself to the computation of an average. Lavra and Studium may be explained in the manner we have suggested above. As for the three Bithynian monasteries, the large numbers of their inmates might have been a late development, the result of the return to Bithynia of numerous monks who had been dispersed during the iconoclastic persecutions. In any case, if we are right in suggesting that Studium grew at the expense of other monasteries, then the number of inmates of these others must necessarily have declined. This must certainly have been the case with Saccudion, and there is no reason to suppose that it may not have been so with the other two Bithynian monasteries.

Putting aside the monastic establishments that supported one hundred or more monks, there remain roughly ninety-four monasteries about the number of whose inmates something is known: one had eighty monks; one, seventy-four; one, fifty-five; one, fifty; two, forty; one, thirty-six; two, thirty; two, between thirty and twenty; and the rest under twenty. The inference that may be drawn from these figures is that the vast majority of the Byzantine establishments housed between ten and twenty monks. This inference finds confirmation in the actual averages which we have been able to compute for three groups of monasteries—the one centering around Symbolon in Attica, the Pantocrator group, and the St. Demetrius group.

What follows is speculative, but may approach actuality. It has been said on good authority that some few years before the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, there still stood in the Byzantine capital eighteen monasteries.<sup>78</sup> These were famous monasteries, especially noted by travellers. Nothing is known, I believe, about the number of monks which each housed at this time. It would be no exaggeration to suppose, however, that they may have housed, on the average,

<sup>74</sup> Irénée Hausherr, ed. and trans., *Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien* (Rome, 1928) (= *Orientalia Christiana*, 12, no. 45), 46, 50.

<sup>75</sup> Dmitrievsky, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 58), 1: 711.

<sup>76</sup> Meyer, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 6), 157.

<sup>77</sup> *Archives de l'Athos*, II. *Actes de Koutlousmus*, ed. Paul Lemerle (1945), 81.

<sup>78</sup> Janin, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 11), 4.

as many as thirty each. This figure is, to be sure, out of line with what we have suggested for the vast majority of Byzantine monasteries, but these eighteen were particularly important ones, and, in any case, it is not inconsistent with the minimum figure suggested by Janin.<sup>79</sup> If this figure were accepted, there would have been a total of five hundred and forty monks in the eighteen monasteries, by no means an impossible number. In a city whose population at the time was about fifty thousand,<sup>80</sup> the existence of five hundred and forty monks would produce a ratio of slightly more than one monk per one hundred inhabitants, a proportion which seems to have obtained also in Thessalonica toward the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

In the course of the centuries the Byzantine Empire underwent many changes—in territorial extent, size of population, economic power, and administrative machinery. But throughout these centuries its world view, its general intellectual style, sustained no fundamental change. This was particularly true, as has already been stated, of its attitude toward monastic life. It is not unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that the ratio of monks to the general population remained more or less the same throughout the centuries.

The population of the Empire at any one period of its existence is not known, and, given the nature of the sources, it is not likely ever to be known. For about the year 1000, E. Stein has estimated a population of approximately 20,000,000; another scholar has put it at 15,000,000.<sup>82</sup> For reasons which have been explained elsewhere,<sup>83</sup> the latter figure is probably too low, but we may use it as a conservative representation of reality. Applying to this figure the ratio of monks to the general population of Constantinople on the eve of its fall, we may say that in the year 1000 there were in the Byzantine Empire slightly more than 150,000 monks and over 7,000 monastic establishments. This estimate may be too low. Nicephorus II Phocas, in his famous novel prohibiting new monastic establishments, speaks of *myriades* of monasteries already in existence, and Basil II, in his, conveys the idea that in many of the villages located in every theme of the Empire there existed establishments which could be called monasteries.<sup>84</sup> And, for purposes of comparison, the situation which obtained in Crete in 1632 may be cited. In that year there were 376 monasteries and 4,000 monks in Crete, whose total population then was 200,000.<sup>85</sup> These figures yield an

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: "Si certains couvents ont compté plusieurs centaines de moines, comme celui de Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Studius, la plupart n'en avaient guère que trente ou quarante."

<sup>80</sup> A. M. Schneider, "Die Bevölkerung Konstantinopels in XV. Jahrhundert," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* (1949), 236-37. I took Schneider's figure in order to be on the conservative side. My own estimate, expressed some years ago, of the population of Constantinople at this time is 75,000. See Charanis, "A Note on the Population and Cities of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century," *The Joshua Starr Memorial Volume* (New York, 1953), 139.

<sup>81</sup> According to one source, the population of Thessalonica at about 1423 numbered 40,000; according to another, it numbered 25,000. See Charanis, *ibid.*, 141 and note 23. At the end of the fourteenth century, there still stood in Thessalonica and environs about nineteen monasteries. Cf. Tafrali, *Tessalonique au quatorzième siècle*, 99-102. Cf. Lascaris, *op. cit. (supra)*, note 12), 320-27.

<sup>82</sup> Charanis, "Observations..." (as in note 29 *supra*), 446.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 446f.

<sup>84</sup> *Idem*, "Monastic Properties..." (as in note 32 *supra*), 56f.; 63f.

<sup>85</sup> Xanthoudides, *op. cit. (supra)*, note 3), 162.

average of slightly less than eleven monks per monastery and a ratio of two monks per one hundred inhabitants. The vast majority of the Byzantine monks fell, generally speaking, within the age group of twenty-five to forty-five; from any point of view the most productive period of life.

His aggregate number, some degree of organization, occasional articulate leadership, a philosophy which emphasized simplicity, kindness, love—these were the factors which made the monk an influential element in Byzantine society.<sup>86</sup> But it was another, mystical quality that gave him special status and formed his image. By the condition of his life he had come very close to the Lord; had, so to speak, touched His garments, and thereby absorbed certain powers which the Lord possessed and which He alone could transmit. The monk's prayers thus became much more effective than the prayers of ordinary folk, and the effectiveness of a monk's prayers was often the principal reason why many laymen founded new monasteries or endowed old ones. In every monastic *typikon* there is the important provision that the monks of the house should pray on behalf of the founder and intercede in favor of his soul when he is dead. And, since the effectiveness of that prayer depended on the way of life of the monk, his life was carefully regulated so that there would be no deviations from the commandments of the Lord, the strict observance of which brought the monk very close to the Lord. Legends circulated that monks had the power to heal the diseased, even to restore life to the dead, to drive evil spirits from one's soul, and to prophesy about one's future.<sup>87</sup>

This matter of prophecies at times even affected politics. Everyone knows the story of the ascetic of Philomelion and the visit to him by Bardanes, the powerful general of Nicephorus I, who contemplated the overthrow of his master. Bardanes, accompanied by three associates—a man by the name of Leo, another, Michael, and a third, Thomas—visited the hermit and inquired of him whether his projected attempt to seize the throne would succeed. The hermit's response was at first rather obscure, but when he saw Bardanes' companions he became specific: "The first and second of these men," he said, "will possess the empire, but thou shalt not. As for the third, he will be merely proclaimed, but will not prosper and will have a bad end." Bardanes failed, but Leo eventually became emperor, as did Michael also. The third, Thomas, better known as Thomas the Slavonian, was proclaimed emperor and even crowned, but after a long and vigorous attempt in the end failed actually to seize the throne.<sup>88</sup> In the form in which it has been transmitted, the prediction was no doubt, to

<sup>86</sup> Brief, sound accounts of Byzantine monasticism: Beck, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 2), 120ff.; J. M. Hussey, "Byzantine Monasticism," in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, 4. *The Byzantine Empire*. Pt. II, *Government, Church and Civilisation* (Cambridge, 1967), 161–84; Olivier Rousseau, "Le rôle important du monachisme dans l'Eglise d'Orient," in *Il Monachesimo Orientale* (= *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 153) (Rome, 1958), 31–55.

<sup>87</sup> The mentality which permeates the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus characterizes virtually all Byzantine hagiographical texts. Peter of Atroa (Laurent [*supra*, note 31], 119), to give one example, restored life to the dead. On saintly monks as healers, see H. J. Magoulias, "The Lives of the Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," *BZ*, 57 (1964), 127ff.; cf. Charanis, "Some Aspects of Daily Life in Byzantium," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 8 (1962–63), 66ff.

<sup>88</sup> Genesis, *Historia* (Bonn, 1834), 8.

use the expression of J. B. Bury,<sup>89</sup> *post eventum*, but it is not at all unlikely that it may have been based on a prophecy actually made to one of the persons involved. Well known also is the story of the encounter in Patras between Basil the Macedonian and the wealthy lady Danelis, an encounter which gave to Basil the economic foundation for his future. Basil had entered the cathedral church of St. Andrew and while there was greeted by a monk who showed him unusual honor. The widow Danelis heard about the episode and asked the monk why it was that he had acted thus toward a stranger, and an unworthy one to boot, whereas at no time had he ever distinguished by any special act herself, her son, or her grandson. "It was not a chance fellow that I saw," the monk replied, "but the future emperor of the Romans annointed by Christ."<sup>90</sup> But one can never know with certainty the inner motives of men. Danelis was a widow, and the unusual care, gifts, and honors which, immediately after this episode, she bestowed on Basil may require another explanation; the prophecy was perhaps an invention designed to cover something else. Nevertheless, the point is that prophecies were very common, that they influenced people, and that the prophets were almost always monks.

In his memoirs Michael Psellos refers to those who have scorned the world in order to lead a life of meditation as the "true philosophers."<sup>91</sup> The reference is, of course, to monks, but not to monks who claimed to have the power to foretell the future or to alter the course of nature and thus to influence people as they wished. He has nothing but contempt for such men. "These men," he writes elsewhere in the same work, "model themselves on the Divine . . . Some of them utter prophecies with the assurance of an oracle, solemnly declaring the will of God. Others profess to change natural laws, cancelling some altogether and extending the scope of others; they claim to make immortal the dissoluble human body and to arrest the natural changes which affect it . . . I know their kind and I have often seen them. Well, these were the men who led the empress (Theodora) astray, telling her she would live forever, and through their deceit she very nearly came to grief herself and brought ruin on the whole Empire as well."<sup>92</sup> Anna Comnena, in a somewhat different context, expresses much the same view.<sup>93</sup> Anna is speaking of her father, but her words would apply to anyone, including monks. She writes: "The Emperor was unable to say to the paralytic, 'Rise up and walk!' or to bid the blind to see, and him who had not feet to walk. This was only in the power of the Only Begotten Son, who for our sakes became man and lived this life here below for the sake of men." Anyone who claimed to do the things that only the Lord could do was ob-

<sup>89</sup> *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire* . . . (London, 1912), 12, note 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Vita Basilii*, in Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn, 1838), 226–28. On Danelis, see Steven Runciman, "The widow Danelis," *Etudes dédiées à la mémoire d'André M. Andreadès* (Athens, 1940), 425–31.

<sup>91</sup> *Chronographia*, ed. E. Renauld (Paris, 1926), I, 73. English trans. E. R. A. Sewter, *The Chronographia of Michael Psellus* (London, 1953), 72 f.; cf. F. Dölger, "Zur Bedeutung von Φιλόσοφος und Φιλοσοφία in Byzantinischer Zeit" in his *Byzanz und die Europäische Staatenwelt* (Speyer am Rhein, 1953), 199. The article was originally published in *Τεσσαρακονταετηρίς Θεοφίλου Βορέα*, 1 (Athens, 1940), 125–36.

<sup>92</sup> Psellus (Renauld), 2: 80 f.; Sewter, 204.

<sup>93</sup> *Alexiade*, ed. B. Leib (Paris, 1937–1945), 3: 216. English trans. Elizabeth A. S. Dawes, *The Alexiad of the Princess Anna Comnena* . . . (London, 1928), 410.

viciously a fake, and Anna knew too much medicine to believe otherwise. In this context, however, in fairness to the Byzantine monk, it should be said that he did not neglect the remedies that medicine had to offer, that the monastery was often the only place where a peasant could go to receive, besides the blessings of the monk, practical medical advice for the treatment of his ailments.<sup>94</sup>

"Nothing was more democratic," a modern scholar has written, "than the recruitment of monasteries. Coarse peasants rubbed shoulders with the greatest lords."<sup>95</sup> The statement can be illustrated by specific source references. Here, the Lives of saints are of the greatest usefulness, although their accuracy is not always unquestionable. Ioannikes, a monk of some prominence during the first half of the ninth century, was a peasant by origin who, from the age of seven to about nineteen, when he entered the army, earned his living by tending hogs.<sup>96</sup> Peter of Atroa was most probably of similar origins.<sup>97</sup> Peasant, too, were the origins of Paul of Latmos and his brother, the monk Basil.<sup>98</sup> Euphymius the Younger came from a family of soldier-peasants,<sup>99</sup> and the parents of Neophytus of Cyprus were farmers.<sup>100</sup> The vast majority, if not all, of those who came to Meletios the Younger on Mt. Cithaeron were certainly peasants. Lampros is of the opinion that most were brigands,<sup>101</sup> his opinion has been disputed by another Greek scholar, or rather ecclesiastic, but there is really no evidence one way or the other.<sup>102</sup> Brigands did often become monks.<sup>103</sup> Peasants themselves, according to the novel of Basil II prohibiting new foundations, were often founders of small monastic establishments which were usually absorbed by the larger ones.<sup>104</sup>

Saints' Lives are laudatory in character, and usually tend to give their heroes a noble origin. There is no reason to doubt, however, the noble origin of Plato and his nephew Theodore, the famous Studite,<sup>105</sup> or that Theophanes, the chronicler, was of good family.<sup>106</sup> When Alexius Musele, under the Emperor Theophilus, decided to become a monk, he bore the title Caesar.<sup>107</sup> Some years earlier, during the reign of Michael II, another high officer of administration chose to abandon the world and embrace monasticism; he is known in hagio-

<sup>94</sup> Magoulas, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 87), 127 ff.; Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος καὶ πολιτισμός* (Athens, 1955), 6: 100 ff. Cf. Charanis, "Some Aspects of Daily Life..." (as in note 87 *supra*), 66-67.

<sup>95</sup> Louis Bréhier, "L'Enseignement classique et l'enseignement religieux à Byzance," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, 21 (1941), 59-60. The internal administration of monasteries as it related to the absence of privileges was not always democratic: E. Jeanselme and L. Oeconomos, "La Satire contre les Higoumènes," *Byzantion*, 1 (1924), 317-39; Koukoules, *ibid.*, 6: 84 ff.

<sup>96</sup> *Vita S. Joannicii a. Saba monacho*, ed. J. Vanden Gheyn in *ActaSS.*, Nov., II, 1 (1894), 333-83.

<sup>97</sup> He was born in a village in Asia Minor of apparently obscure parents: Laurent, *La vie...* (as in note 31 *supra*), 69.

<sup>98</sup> *Vita S. Pauli Iunioris*, ed. H. Delehay ( = Th. Wiegand, *Milet*, Band III, Heft I: *Der Latmos* [Berlin, 1913]), 106. Paul and his brother Basil were relatives of Ioannikes; *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>99</sup> Petit, "Vie et office de Saint Euthyme le jeune," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, 8, no. 2 (1903), 168-205.

<sup>100</sup> Mango and Hawkins, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 3), 123.

<sup>101</sup> Sp. Lampros, "Ἡ Ἑλλάς ἐπὶ τῶν Βυζαντινῶν," *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημῶν*, 18 (1924), 199.

<sup>102</sup> Chr. A. Papadopoulos, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 9), 111.

<sup>103</sup> John Moschus, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 50), 3004-5, 3032-33; cf. Menthon, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 4), 141.

<sup>104</sup> Charanis, "Monastic Properties..." (as in note 32 *supra*), 63.

<sup>105</sup> *Vita S. Theodori Studitae* (as in note 47 *supra*), 116.

<sup>106</sup> *Vitae*, ed. C. de Boor in Theophanes *Chronographia*, II (Leipzig, 1885), 4, 14, 28, 30.

<sup>107</sup> P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963), 25.



graphy as Saint Anthony the Young.<sup>108</sup> The father of Ignatius had been an emperor.<sup>109</sup> Michael Maleinos, the uncle of Nicephorus Phocas, belonged to the aristocracy.<sup>110</sup> Athanasius, the founder of Lavra on Mt. Athos, came from a rich family from the Pontus.<sup>111</sup> Nicephorus himself was expected to embrace monasticism, and the quite different direction in which the course of events led him proved very painful to his ascetic friends, particularly Athanasius.<sup>112</sup> Saint Luke, the New Stylite, one of the more famous ascetics of the tenth century, is said also to have been of wealthy origin.<sup>113</sup> The parents of Symeon, the New Theologian, were very well-to-do, possessing a library of their own. Symeon's uncle was an influential figure in the imperial court and was eager to launch his youthful nephew into a career of administration, but the young man's thoughts ran in a different direction.<sup>114</sup>

These men, and others who might have been cited, embraced the monastic life on their own volition. There were others high up the social ladder who were forced to do so, in the vast majority of cases for political reasons. These persons were usually unsuccessful rebels, or suspected of contemplating some plot, or perhaps the subject of a prophecy that they would reach the throne. Rather than being put to death, such people were relegated to a monastery, there to pass the rest of their lives in peace and tranquillity. The list, too long for detailed analysis—and such an analysis is not necessary—<sup>115</sup> includes twelve former emperors<sup>116</sup> and a number of imperial princesses,<sup>117</sup> the latter no doubt forced to take the vows for dynastic reasons. Interdynastic marriages, at least in the middle Byzantine period, were very rare.<sup>118</sup> If imperial princesses were to be allowed to marry, they would have had to marry Byzantine potentates, which was too dangerous for the ruling monarch. Virtually all the former emperors who were confined to a monastery accepted their new fate with equanimity. Three of them, Michael IV, Isaac I Comnenus, and John VI Cantacuzenus, may actually have wished it. It was illness, of course, that pushed Michael IV out of the throne and sent him to a monastery. About his predilection for the monastic life, however, there is little doubt. Throughout his reign he had shown special regard for the genuine monks, the ones Psellos calls philosophers. "What land and sea," Psellos writes, "did he not thoroughly

<sup>108</sup> S. Halkin, "Saint Antoine le Jeune et Pétronas le Vainqueur des Arabes en 863 (d'après un texte inédit)," *Analecta Bollandiana*, 62 (1944), 188; cf. Menthon, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 4), 141 ff.

<sup>109</sup> Michael I (811–813).

<sup>110</sup> Petit, "Vie de Saint Michel Maléinos . . .," *RevOrChr*, 7 (1902), 550 f.

<sup>111</sup> Meyer, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 6), 22.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 103 f.

<sup>113</sup> A. Vogt, "Vie de S. Luc le Stylite," *Analecta Bollandiana*, 28 (1909), 16–17; F. Vanderstuyf, "La vie de saint Luc le Stylite (897–979). Text grec édité et traduit," *Patrologia Orientalis*, 11 (1915), 200; H. Delehay, *Les saints stylites* (= Subsidia Hagiographica, 14) (Brussels, 1923), 195–237; Menthon, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 4) 121–25.

<sup>114</sup> Hausherr, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 74), 2, 4, 12.

<sup>115</sup> For examples: Theophanes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 27), I, 469, 479, 483; Cedrenus, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 27), II, 128, 172, 277, 281, 297, 302, 311, 342, 351, 478, 497, 511, 535, 550, 561.

<sup>116</sup> R. Guiland, *Etudes byzantines* (Paris, 1959), 34–37.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 44–45.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio*, ed. and trans. Gy. Moravcsik and R. J. H. Jenkins, rev. ed., Dumbarton Oaks Texts, I (Washington, D. C., 1967), 70–72.

search, what clefts in the rocks, what secret holes in the earth, that he might bring to the light of day one who was hidden there? Once he had found them, he would carry them off to his palace. And then what honor did he not pay them, washing their dust-covered feet, even putting his arms about them and gladly embracing their bodies, secretly clothing himself in their rags and making them lie down on his imperial bed, while he cast himself down on some humble couch, with a hard stone for a pillow."<sup>119</sup> Illness, too, was the initial factor which eventually led Isaac Comnenus to abandon the throne and then to enter a monastery. Once he became a monk, he conducted himself with all humility, performing various menial chores, including that of a doorman.<sup>120</sup> In the case of John Cantacuzenus, it was not illness but frustration, a realization perhaps of the havoc he had wrought in his efforts to put himself on the throne, that led him to abandon the imperial seat in favor of monasticism.<sup>121</sup> It was during his long life as a monk that Cantacuzenus composed his *Memoires* and other writings. Michael VII, when forced from the throne, embraced monasticism and subsequently became bishop of Ephesus. Eventually, however, he abandoned his see and returned to the monastery, where he worked the fields with his own hands.<sup>122</sup>

It is, of course, a familiar fact that the Byzantine Empire, in its ethnic composition, was not purely Greek; that it included within its borders a number of other peoples. This fact was reflected in the monastic population of the Empire. The various national monasteries which were early established in Constantinople disappeared with the loss of Egypt and Syria.<sup>123</sup> Later, other monasteries of a more or less national character, such as the Slavic monasteries on Mt. Athos, made their appearance. The point to stress, however, is that there were elements other than Greek in the population of the general monastic establishments. From the ninth century there were Georgians in at least three monasteries or hermitages on Mt. Olympus. The Georgians who founded the Athonian monastery of Iviron about 980 had sojourned for some time on Olympus.<sup>124</sup> Iviron eventually housed Slavs in addition to Georgians. Saint Mary the Younger, who founded a monastic establishment in Thrace, was Armenian by origin.<sup>125</sup> Armenian monks are met with on Mt. Galasion.<sup>126</sup> We are told that Saint Euthymius the Younger, while sojourning on Mt. Athos, had

<sup>119</sup> Psellos, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 91), Renauld, I, 73; Sewter, 73. The language of the translation is that of Sewter.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, Renauld, II, 132; Sewter, 247; Cedrenus (as in note 27 *supra*), II, 647ff. Cf. Guillard, *op. cit.*, 34f.

<sup>121</sup> Guillard, *ibid.*, 35; D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, XI (Washington, D. C., 1968), 86; V. Parisot, *Cantacuzène homme d'état et historien*... (Paris, 1845), 285ff.

<sup>122</sup> Guillard, *op. cit.*, 36f.

<sup>123</sup> R. Janin, "Les monastères nationaux et provinciaux à Byzance (Constantinople et environs)," *Echos d'Orient*, 32, no. 172 (Oct.—Dec., 1933), 429–38.

<sup>124</sup> P. Peeters, "S. Hilarion d'Ibérie," *AnalBoll*, 32 (1913), 253; *idem*, "Histoires monastiques géorgiennes," *ibid.*, 36–37 (1917–19), 17, 19; *idem*, "Un colophon géorgien de Thornik le moine," *ibid.*, 50 (1932), 364, 365. Cf. Cedrenus (as in note 27 *supra*), II, 487–88. Cf. D. M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*... (London, 1956), 154ff.

<sup>125</sup> P. Peeters, "Une sainte arménienne oubliée. Sainte Marie la Jeune († 902–903)" in his *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales* (= *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 27) (Brussels, 1951), 1: 129–35.

<sup>126</sup> *De Sancto Lazaro, monacho in Monte Galesio*, *ActaSS*, Nov., 3 (1910), 542.

as his constant companion a certain Armenian hermit by the name of Joseph. The biographer of Euthymius apparently did not like Armenians, for he says: "This Joseph, though Armenian by race, was not a stealthy and crafty man. He was simple, candid and guileless."<sup>127</sup> When all is said and done, however, it should be emphasized that Byzantine monastic establishments—leaving out of consideration the Georgian, Armenian, and Slavic provinces—whatever their composition, ended by becoming Greek, unless special circumstances affected the situation. This statement finds confirmation in the *typikon* which the Georgian Gregory Pacourianos issued in favor of the monastery which he founded and richly endowed at Petritzos (Bačkovovo in Bulgaria), then, of course, a Byzantine province. Pacourianos founded the monastery for fellow Georgians and made it a point to specify that no Greek should ever be admitted, because Greeks, he said, had a way of taking things over.<sup>128</sup>

What was it that turned a Byzantine away from the world to embrace monasticism? The question admits of no single answer. Monasticism was an established way of life, and, as such, drew men and women to it. But there were surely specific reasons which varied from individual to individual. Peasants were drawn to monasteries because there they could better their lot.<sup>129</sup> This was most probably the reason why so many of them flocked around Meletios on Mt. Cithaeron. Some shocking experience, some disappointment in life may perhaps have moved others. Ioannikes is said to have decided to leave the army and become a monk after he had seen so many of his comrades lying dead on the battlefield in Bulgaria in 795.<sup>130</sup> A similar story is told about a certain Nicholas, a soldier in the army of Nicephorus I when that emperor led his last expedition into Bulgaria. Nicholas had a dream to the effect that the battlefield would be strewn with Roman bodies, and when the next day he saw that this was indeed the case, he decided to leave the army and become a monk.<sup>131</sup> He eventually achieved sainthood. Musele, the Ceasar under Theophilus and for a time heir apparent to the throne, may have decided to become a monk because with the birth of Michael, he saw his chances for accession destroyed.<sup>132</sup> It is said of a certain person who achieved high position in the army under Theophilus that he saw, while praying, how vain all things in the world were, and thereupon renounced his military career and became a monk.<sup>133</sup> He, too, achieved sainthood. Euthymius the Younger never allowed himself to forget the saying of the Lord: "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake will receive a

<sup>127</sup> Petit, "Vie et office..." (as in note 99 *supra*), 184.

<sup>128</sup> Louis Petit, "Typikon de Grégoire Pacourianos pour le monastère de Pétritzos (Bačkovovo) en Bulgarie," *VizVrem*, 11 (Suppl. 1) (1904), 44.

<sup>129</sup> This was most probably the reason why Paul of Latros and his brother Basil embraced monasticism. Cf. *Vita S. Pauli*... (as in note 98 *supra*), 106.

<sup>130</sup> *Vita S. Joannicii*... (as in note 96 *supra*), 337–38.

<sup>131</sup> Léon Clugnet, "Histoire de Saint Nicolas, soldat et moine. Texte Grec," *RevOrChr*, 7 (1902), 319–20. St. Luke, the new stylite, is said to have had the same experience: Vogt, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 113), 8. Another high official is said to have become a monk as the result of the wrecking of the fleet which he commanded. *Vita S. Arsenii*, ed. H. Delehay, in Wiegand, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 98), 171–72.

<sup>132</sup> Charanis, *The Armenians*... (as in note 107 *supra*), 25.

<sup>133</sup> Menthon, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 4), 135.

hundred fold and inherit eternal life."<sup>134</sup> Symeon the New Theologian read a great deal of the ascetic literature, including the spiritual ladder of John Climacus.<sup>135</sup> This was perhaps what decided him to become a monk. General environment, too, may have played a role. The household of Theodore the Studite when he was young was run by his mother as though it were a monastery.<sup>136</sup> All these reasons, of course, apply to those who took the vows on their own volition. As for those who were forced to do so, their vows apparently were not binding. A certain John, for instance, a favorite of Romanus II, was allowed by the Patriarch Polyeuctos to abandon monastic life on the grounds that he had been forced into it by Constantine VII.<sup>137</sup>

The degree and extent of literacy in the Byzantine Empire constitute a problem which is not likely ever to be settled, but the matter may perhaps be somewhat different in the case of the monks. That monks should be able to read was an expectation which became part of the tradition from the very beginning of organized Christian monasticism. Pachomius had ruled that anyone who was ignorant when he entered a monastery should first have to learn the rules that he must observe. He would then be given twenty psalms, or two epistles of the Apostle, or a part of another book of the Scriptures to learn. If he did not know how to read, he had to learn by studying three times a day with the one who was capable of teaching him.<sup>138</sup> Thus illiterates might enter a monastery, but as monks they could not remain illiterate. The matter of reading skill found general acceptance in Byzantine monasticism and was expressed in law.<sup>139</sup> Theodore the Studite put it very clearly: "It should be known that on days when we perform no physical labor the librarian strikes a gong once, the brothers gather at the place where the books are kept, and each takes one, reading it until late. Before the bell is rung for evening service the librarian strikes again, and all come to return their books according to the list. If anyone is late with his book, he is subject to a penalty."<sup>140</sup> We find the same regulations expressed in almost the same language in a document relating to the monastery of Lavra on Mt. Athos.<sup>141</sup> Reading was done, of course, from religious books;<sup>142</sup> in Byzantine monastic circles there was definite hostility to profane literature.<sup>143</sup>

This obligation to read was the reason why monasteries collected libraries and in many cases included among the ranks of the brethren a calligrapher.<sup>144</sup> These libraries constituted, relatively speaking, important collections of books

<sup>134</sup> Petit, "Vie et office . . ." (as in note 99 *supra*), 177, 181.

<sup>135</sup> Hausherr, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 74), 12.

<sup>136</sup> Alice Gardner, *Theodore of Studium, his life and times* (London, 1905), 14-17.

<sup>137</sup> Cedrenus (as in note 27 *supra*), II, 339.

<sup>138</sup> As cited by G. Bardy, "Les origines des écoles monastiques en Orient," *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck*, I, *Antiquité* (Gembloux, 1951), 295.

<sup>139</sup> *Corpus Juris Civilis*, 3: *Novellae*, ed. R. Schoell (Berlin, 1854), 669 (Nov. CXXXIII, 2).

<sup>140</sup> Theodore Studite, "Constitutiones Studitanae," PG, 99, col. 1713; Dmitrievsky, *Typika* (as in note 58 *supra*) 1: 233. I used the translation of Nigel G. Wilson, "The Libraries of the Byzantine World," *Greek-Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 8 (1967), no. 1, 63.

<sup>141</sup> Dmitrievsky, *ibid.*, 255.

<sup>142</sup> Bréhier, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 95), 64, 65.

<sup>143</sup> P. Van Den Ven, *La vie grecque de S. Jean le Psichaitte*, ext. *Le Muséon*, N.S., 3 (1902), 17. Cf. Dvornik, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 52), 29-30; Bury, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 89), 440-41.

<sup>144</sup> See, for instance, Meyer, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 6), 129.

and were used by scholars for their enlightenment.<sup>145</sup> It is said of a certain intellectual, for instance, that he went about visiting the various monasteries searching in their libraries, and so arrived at the level of knowledge which he finally achieved.<sup>146</sup> It would be a mistake, however, to infer from all this that the Byzantine monks of organized establishments were all and always literate. Persons are known by name who were illiterate when they became monks, but subsequently learned to read. St. Neophytus of Cyprus, for instance, learned not only to read, but also to write.<sup>147</sup> There are others, however, who remained illiterate even as acknowledged monks. One of these, Gerasimus, became patriarch in 1320.<sup>148</sup> It is difficult not to suspect that the majority of those who followed Meletios on Mt. Cithaeron were illiterates to begin with and never learned to read. There is a provision which the reader encounters in some of the monastic *typika* to the effect that some of the monks were to occupy themselves exclusively with the offices of the Church, the service of the liturgy, while others were to perform merely menial tasks. Thus, in the *typikon* issued by the Sebastocrator Isaac in 1152 in favor of the monastery of the Kosmosotira which he founded near Aenos, it is specified that fifty of the monks housed therein must occupy themselves exclusively with liturgical services; twenty-four others, however, were to perform various manual tasks.<sup>149</sup> So it was also in the *typikon* issued by Michael VIII Palaeologus in favor of the monastery of St. Demetrius. The *typikon* calls for a complement of thirty-six monks: fifteen to occupy themselves exclusively with liturgical matters, twenty-one with various manual tasks.<sup>150</sup> To infer from this that the monks whose duties were strictly liturgical were those who knew how to read, while the others were probably illiterate is by no means unreasonable. This inference finds some confirmation in a monastic document of about 1164 which bears the signatures of twenty-eight monks. Of these twenty-eight, seventeen actually signed their own names; eleven affixed their signature by a symbol. Among the latter, two were tenders of the vineyards, one was a gardener, and one a doorkeeper.<sup>151</sup> It may be that in some Byzantine monasteries monks who were able to read predominated, while in others the opposite held true. In any case, the central point is that there were many monks who could read in the Byzantine organized monastic establishments.

To read is not necessarily to be educated. The Byzantine monk, with some notable exceptions, remained essentially an uneducated man. He read his Scriptures or chanted the psalms and adhered to tradition.<sup>152</sup> Nor did any Byzantine

<sup>145</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, 53–80. Wilson used O. Volk, *Die byzantinischen Klosterbibliotheken von Konstantinopel, Thessalonike und Kleinasien* (Diss. Munich, 1955). I was not able to get access to this work.

<sup>146</sup> Cedrenus (as in note 27 *supra*), 2: 170.

<sup>147</sup> Mango and Hawkins, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 3), 123. Ioannikes learned to read after he became a monk: *Vita S. Joannicii* . . . (as in note 96 *supra*), 340.

<sup>148</sup> Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina historia* (Bonn, 1829), 292.

<sup>149</sup> Petit, "Typikon du monastère . . ." (as in note 59 *supra*), 21.

<sup>150</sup> Grégoire, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 62), 173.

<sup>151</sup> Dmitrievsky, *Typika* (as in note 58 *supra*), 1: 709–10.

<sup>152</sup> The synod which examined the ascetic Theodore of Coloneia, whom John Tzimiskes had nominated to become patriarch of Antioch, found that he was completely ignorant of all profane learning, but was well instructed in things divine; Leo Deaconus, *Historiae* (Bonn, 1828), 100–101.

monastic establishment ever become a major educational center. The monastic schools which are occasionally mentioned in the sources were purely elementary establishments, places where young boys left in the care of the monasteries were taught how to read in order that they might be able to read the Scriptures.<sup>153</sup> Such young boys were often dedicated to monasteries by their parents, or were assigned to them in some other way. Anna Comnena, for instance, says of her father: "The children who had lost their parents and were afflicted with the bitter evil of orphanhood he distributed among his relations or others who, as he knew, led a well-conducted life, or sent them to the abbots of the holy monasteries with orders to bring them up, not as slaves, but as free children and allow them a thorough education and instructions in the Holy Writings."<sup>154</sup>

"Monks are of service for neither war nor any other necessity . . . they have appropriated the greater part of the earth. On a pretext of giving everything to the poor they have, so to speak, made everyone poor." This statement is by Zosimus,<sup>155</sup> the fifth-century "pagan" historian, and its intent is obviously hostile. Monks are, of course, not useful as soldiers and by reason of their vows cannot participate in the process of procreation. These considerations have been touched upon elsewhere in this paper, and the suggestion bears repeating that these may have been the reasons why Constantine V sought to put an end to monasticism.

The question of giving to the poor is another matter, and here we shall have to divest ourselves of the hostility of Zosimus. The dispensation of charity, a function early assumed by the church, in due course was also assumed by monastic establishments. This function was not simply a matter of giving alms to the poor or of offering shelter to the weary traveller. It was that, of course, but it was something more. Throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire, there were various establishments designed to take care of the needs of a variety of unfortunate people. There were houses for the poor, for the old, for orphans; there were hostels and hospitals. A great many of these establishments were associated with monasteries; maintained, managed, and directed by the monks. This matter has been thoroughly discussed by Dr. Constantelos in the book which he has recently published,<sup>156</sup> and, as a consequence, we need not here enter into details. There is one hospital, however, which has always struck my fancy and about which I would like to make some remarks.

That hospital is the one attached to the monastery of the Pantocrator which the Emperor John II founded in Constantinople in the twelfth century, more exactly in 1136.<sup>157</sup> This hospital was a remarkable institution. Its fifty-odd beds

<sup>153</sup> Leroy, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 49), 42; Bréhier, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 95), 63-64.

<sup>154</sup> Anna Comnena, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 93), Leib, 3: 214; Dawes, 409. The translation used is that of Dawes.

<sup>155</sup> *Historia Nova*, ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1887), 244; *idem*, *Historia Nova: The Decline of Rome*, trans. James Buchanan and Harold T. Davis (San Antonio, 1967), 217. I use the words of the translators.

<sup>156</sup> Demetrios J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, 1968), xxviii, 356.

<sup>157</sup> Dmitrievsky, *Typika* (as in note 58 *supra*), 682ff.; cf. Charanis, "Some Aspects of Daily Life . . ." (as in note 87 *supra*), 68f.

were divided into five sections or wards, each ward directed by two physicians and open to specific types of cases. One was given to general medical service, where acute ailments were treated; it consisted of twenty beds. Another, containing ten beds, was devoted to surgery, where care of wounds, fractures, and cases involving surgical intervention was undertaken. A ward consisting of twelve beds was open only to women for the treatment of diseases and irregularities peculiar to their sex, while another of eight beds housed patients who suffered from eye ailments. Finally, there was a psychiatric ward, where epilepsy and various mental disorders were treated. There was, in addition, what could be called an outpatient department, where the ailing came, were examined, and—their ailments diagnosed and treatment prescribed—returned home to come back sometime later for a check-up. The staff consisted of thirty-six physicians of various grades, including several women, and some nurses. Attached to the hospital was also a professor of medicine, whose presence there gave it something of the character of a medical school. There were also a number of service establishments. These included a pharmacy, a mill, a bakery, a kitchen, a laundry, and bathing houses. The bathing establishment must have been in frequent use, for it was prescribed that patients should be made to take two baths a week. The laundry, too, must have been a busy place, for upon entering the hospital the patient was provided with hospital clothes, while his own were taken away, washed and ironed, and returned to him when he was dismissed. The medicine practiced in this hospital was no doubt that of Galen, but its organization seems remarkably modern.

The remark of Zosimus that the monk “appropriates the greater part of the earth,” was, of course, a rhetorical exaggeration. Nevertheless, a competent modern authority on the internal history of the Byzantine Empire has estimated that at the end of the seventh century, about one-third of the usable land of the Empire was in the possession of the church and the monasteries.<sup>158</sup> For a time, the iconoclastic movement checked the growth of monasticism, and by confiscations considerably reduced the property holdings of monasteries. But once the movement was over, monasteries grew greatly in number, and their properties increased. Original endowments, subsequent gifts by the pious, purchases, and downright encroachments on the property of others were the principal sources for this increase. The property amassed was beyond measure, and the major sufferers were the peasant proprietors and eventually the State itself. There were emperors—we have treated this matter elsewhere in detail—who tried to check this evil. Some even resorted to confiscations. But, in the end, the monks won. As the Empire approached its end, much of its usable land was in the possession of monasteries.<sup>159</sup> The monks did not bring about the decline of the Byzantine Empire; they did, however, create economic and social conditions which helped to bring it about.

<sup>158</sup> V. G. Vasilievsky, “Materials for the Study of the Byzantine State,” *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniia*, 202 (St. Petersburg, 1879) (in Russian), 162. I consulted this work some time ago with the help of Mrs. Nathalie Scheffer.

<sup>159</sup> On all this, see my study, “Monastic Properties . . .” (as in note 32 *supra*), 51–118.

The monk was an omnipresent ingredient of Byzantine society. Nothing short of a thorough overhauling of that society, a complete change in its constituents, could have altered his position. He furnished the Church with its bishops and patriarchs. According to Bréhier, between 705, when Cyrus—a hermit of Amastreia who had predicted to Justinian II his restoration to the throne—became patriarch, and 1204, when Constantinople fell to the Latins, forty-five of the fifty-seven patriarchs were monks.<sup>160</sup> The situation was not much different in the period that followed. In Byzantium, the populace respected and admired the monk and frequently turned to him in time of need. Emperors loved him, shared their table with him, sought his blessing, and when on the point of launching some important undertaking, often consulted him.<sup>161</sup> Monks were considered to be a spiritual force upon which the very safety of the Empire depended. This matter was clearly expressed by Alexius III of Trebizond in the chrysobull which he issued in 1364 in favor of the monastery at Soumela. He said that he relied for the defense of his Empire more upon spiritual than material weapons; that he placed greater faith in monasteries than in fortresses.<sup>162</sup> This seems wrong, of course. What he needed were more fortresses and the manpower to garrison them, and this was how some of the emperors of the past, however fond of monks they may have been, would have viewed the matter. Yet, when account is taken of the situation as it then actually existed, he may have been right. For the monastery as an institution survived the general catastrophe, and in due course helped the Christian peoples of the Balkan peninsula to regain their dignity.

#### *Postscriptum*

Harun-ibn-Yahya, an Arab prisoner held in Constantinople sometime during the second half of the ninth century, mentions six monasteries located in the environs of Constantinople. One of them, he says, had a population of 500 monks; another, 1,000; the other four together, 12,000. The accuracy of these figures is, to say the least, highly questionable: A. A. Vasiliev, "Harun-ibn-Yahya and his Description of Constantinople," *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, V (1932), 161.

<sup>160</sup> Bréhier, *Le monde byzantin*, 2. *Les institutions de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1949), 483.

<sup>161</sup> Leo IV is said to have been a friend of the monks: Theophanes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 115), I, 449. Petronas visited Latros to consult and obtain the blessings of the monks before launching his expedition against the Arabs: Cedrenus, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 27), II, 163; Halkin, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 108), 218–19. Leo VI shared his table with monks: Theophanes Continuatus, 365f. Romanus I is said to have honored the monks: Cedrenus, *ibid.*, II, 320. Constantin VII visited Mt. Olympus and sought the blessings of the monks; Cedrenus, *ibid.*, II, 337. Constantin X Ducas is referred to as a lover of monks: Cedrenus, II, 652. Reference has already been made to Michael IV as a lover of monks.

<sup>162</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 56), 5: 276f. Cf. G. A. Soteriou, *Αἱ Μοναὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ ἡ ἐθνικὴ αὐτῶν δράσις κατὰ τοὺς βυζαντινοὺς χρόνους* (Athens, 1936).